

# BILL IS WELL NOW

Not Entirely, But Well Enough  
to Write Well

## ABOUT HOW THINGS DO MOVE

Senator Vance Back From the Holy Land.  
Bill Meets Big Little Mr. Eber—  
Other Nyeish Jottings.

ASHVILLE, N. C., January.—This has been a very gentle and balmy winter for the native far better as well as the Cape Cod asthmatic and bronchial wheezer from the frozen home of the abolitionist who may have been spending the season here.

Tropical growths are getting along first rate here if kept indoors, and such subtropical vegetation as the John pine, the poplar and the hederach are growing in the open air.

Senator Zebulon B. Vance has returned from the Holy Land with a new story picked up on the sea of Galilee. It is a corker.

Senator Vance is looking well and returns to his senatorial labors with renewed vigor and a traveled air which we North Carolina people alone lack to make us shine.

He says that Salter's is pronounced by him.

Senator Vance was there during the Wagner imbroglio. I do not know what an imbroglio is, but I think it was that. He told several stories illustrative of American humor while at Byrd, and I understood it, interspersed between the Wagner selections. They were not well received.

He told an anecdote of ex-Governor Hildreth's of Wisconsin, regarding an experience he had while in the army. After a forced march of eight weeks during which the brigade did not touch food, being anxious to close the war, they camped one night at a crossroads where it was found that in an old deserted tobacco warehouse there were erected three barrels of sparkling, home-made, Dent corn Heidsieck, grown on the place.

The boys tried to get at it, but the officers saw at once that there would not be more than enough for themselves, and so placed a guard over the liquor. In the night the boys got into the basement of the warehouse with eight clean swatbills and an auger, and in the morning it was found that two of the barrels were empty and most of the brigade full.

The following night, after apollinaris and family prayers, it was resolved to try and get the other barrel in order to scotch that vague unrest and one thing and another which one feels after an undue indulgence in spirituous, vinous, malt or fermented liquors. They did not know that the guard had put the third barrel on two sawhorses a foot above their angry's utmost scope. All night they bored holes into the nocturnal boom of the scotch hours, all unmindful that the guard slept by the barrel in a new place on the floor.

Toward morning Governor Hildreth took the anger with a heavy heart and bored a new hole in the boom of the night. He did not strike where he sought, but there was a wild shriek from above, and when the governor pulled the anger out he found on it the fragment of a gray army shirt and a birkmark. Leaving the eight new tube where they were, also over 400,000 new anger holes that had never been used; they all went away.

Senator Vance told it better than I have, but when he got through the German friend of Wagner said:

"Um—yah! Not vain of a story was dat?"

"That is a humorous story. That is American humor."

"No, my friend, excuse me. Dot was not yesser, dot was a lam lie."

Senator Vance will, during this session, move the passage of an act authorizing the city of New York to buy the street bonds of the city of Asheville. The city has been authorized of course some time ago to sell, but New York has not bought the bonds, no doubt feeling some hesitation toward congressional authority, but this will be soon remedied by act of the national legislature and all will be well.

The colored people of Asheville each year celebrate on the 1st of January their emancipation from slavery. They



THE COLORED PARADE.  
parade on the street in strange costumes, and many of them improve their appearance by wearing false faces of a repulsive character.

This year the procession was quite large and embraced many of our best known colored people.

Mr. Plum Levi, the barber of the old school who shaved me five years ago and still points with pride to the gray towel which he used on me, was in the procession. He wore a pink mask and a mangle made of two large perforated rubber doormats. His feet were in canvas in easy and commodious slippers, each made from the pelt of a dead cat.

Plum Levi carried a navy blue domino with knitted hood and blue soldier pants. He was the life of the procession, and almost everything he did was mythical. He is a great reader, always abreast of the times, and may be often found reading the Asheville Citizen after 10 o'clock at night.

Miss Pearl Beckus, of Cassack, N. Y., is saying a visit to former Blue Bird friends and took part in the parade. She is yet in her teens, but has the wonderful gift of being able to cook for her employer's family and have enough left over each month for an aged mother who has been again recently blessed with twins. It is a big task to

the kind old heart of Pearl's widowed mother to know in her declining years that her daughter will look out for her. Mutual love among people of moderate means is always a grateful sight.

She wore a fur trimmed street dress like one her mistress at Cassack wore just before Pearl left there.

I had occasion to meet my friend Mr. Franz Eber of the Lithuanian company, a short time ago. He is about the size of the dividend hung on the Christmas



MEETING THE GREAT EBER.

tree for me this year by Russell Sage, and yet in twenty-three years of age, a good comedian and pleasing after dinner speaker.

He has the air, though, of a successful actor, and the amount of dignity he has considering the small place he has to drape it over makes me laugh, for I am a great hand to notice things that make a deep impression on me.

He did not seem to unbend, I thought, so much as he ought, considering that crowned heads have rested on this bosom, such as it is, and that dynasties have staid all night at our house.

After I had gone the owner of the theater said to him reproachfully: "That was Mr. Nye, the great American humorous writer, Mr. Eber. Did you understand the name fully when I introduced you?"

"Yes," said Mr. Eber, with a rising inflection, as he sat down on the chimney of a footlight. "I ting I had heard off him."

I do not say this to hurt Eber, for he is too great a man to be hurt by newspaper criticism, but why in heaven's name cannot people of prominence get along smoothly together? I think we should stand by each other. Ten years ago I met the two headed girl for the first time, and while the meeting was not cordial, it was cordial. I have also met the Prince of Wales and Sitting Bull, and there was no coldness, no professional jealousy between us.

I also once met Joseph Cook, who was on his way to his regular work repairing and editing some of the works of God, and even he was kindly and almost sweet to me.

So I say that people of prominence should play into one another's hands.

Reminiscences of Senator Plumb are so plenty since his death that I venture to call up one of the incidents of his early experience. We had been running around over the Capitol, looking at whatever was curious in the way of memoranda sent in to congress by the presidents, like appointments, etc.—some in pencil on manilla paper containing a whole cabinet perhaps, but as informal as a list of vegetables for your cook to order for Sunday; then others would be stiff and formal, like George Washington engaged in taking the thirty-third degree in Masonry. We had looked over and commented on all these things, swapped bon mots with Senator Ingalls, greatly to our own advantage, for Senator Plumb was never remarkable for his repartee, and as a bright and ready bon motter I could never make wages, being slow of thought and possessing rather a profound mind—not of course the profundity noticed in fresh, young, newly matriculated ashob, but a depth which is slowly stirred, shadowed over with an earnest gloom.

We then went up into the gallery and for an hour or two forgot our own greatness; the senate chamber faded away on the drowsy, buzzing wings of the motion to refer to the committee on rules; the hot, Turkish bath air which is used to sprout the senatorial thought lulled us to half forgetfulness and hushed the pop of the committee's report. For the time we were back again in the far west, with widening miles between us and the chaste refinement of Senator Hosi; with billowing, breezy states between us and the classic Hiccock, the deep, appealing eyes of Cameron and the Roman nose of Edmunds; we were again sitting astride the waxy cayuse or returning hurriedly to camp, where kind hands again pulled out the arrow of the savage and told us how the place looked to one who could get around there and see for himself. How kind hands could tell this to one I leave about there and see for himself. How kind hands could tell this to one I leave about there and see for himself.

"We used to make our writing ink in the early days where I lived," said Mr. Plumb, "of maple bark, which was boiled down till it was a little redder than cranberry juice and a little thicker than stomp water."

"It looked badly, but it was a pot compared to the way it smelled. It smelled like the village at low tide, New York when it is opening up a subway on a hot day shows great possibilities, but it cannot get in the little trills and throbs of meekly and antique stench that this homemade and fermented ink did."

"Once I went over to try a case before a poor white justice of the peace over thirty miles away. He was a plain, uneducated man, who used his tongue in writing and breathed heavily, like a mush kettle, while thinking."

"Opposed to me as counsel was a man who had been admitted to the bar. I had not. He was rather pompous, and hated to try a case before a country justice, but he had to do it. He was hot and cross, and while he was making his argument one of the children got an acorn up its nose and we had to stop and have it out with the iron worm on an old rummer. That made counsel mad, and while he was making a dictatorial motion the justice picked a bar out of the palm of his hand with a bar low knife and overruled it."

"Then counsel got so hot that he forgot himself and said things to the court which ought to have remained forever unsaid. After that the court got angry and threatened to commit counsel for contempt. Counsel allowed that the court did not know enough to draw the mittimus."

"All right, I will show you," says the court, and thereupon he bit off a piece of tobacco about the size of a prayer book and took down a large, fat volume of forms for justices of the peace weighing about nine pounds and smelling of pork gravy and childhood."

"He wrote on and on till dinner time. Then he glared at the man he was engaged in committing and at the undemonstrative corn dodger with him meantime."

"I didn't mind the bitterness between the court and counsel, for it was all good for my side. After dinner the Square rolled up one corner of the oil-cloth tablecloth and went on with the mittimus. All that afternoon, with bulging eyes and wet brow, while opposing counsel sat and smoked under the cool shadow of the cottonwood, the leading gentleman on the superheated woodstock painfully wrote on."

"Toward twilight, as the frogs in the hollow smote the soft and ebullient gloaming with their metallic song, the court closed with the final 'whereof fall not at your peril,' and the commitment was duly drawn."

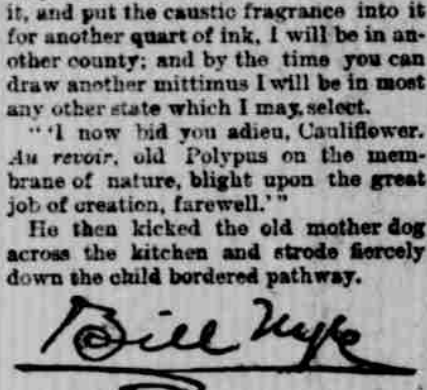
"Looking over earnestly at it and leaning on the shoulder of the court, I can still see the calm, pale face of counsel as he looked searchingly over the still wet and fragrant document."

"Then firmly and deftly upsetting the big, quart ink bottle over the mighty legal masterpiece, and thereby turning loose upon the horrified night a fragrance so able, so durable and so pronounced that you could tie horses to it, he said:

"There, you overgrown mushrat! You shapeless paunch of justice without its brains; you overgrown and fungus error on the face of nature; you old he mud hen of the swamps; you malarial old intellectual wart on the brow of creation, by the time you can go down on the bottoms and gather your maple bark and bring it home and boil it, and put the caustic fragrance into it for another quart of ink, I will be in another country, and by the time you can draw another mittimus I will be in most any other state which I may select."

"I now bid you adieu, Canilflower. As reverend, old Polybus on the membrane of nature, blight upon the great job of creation, farewell."

He then kicked the old mother dog across the kitchen and strode fiercely down the child bordered pathway."



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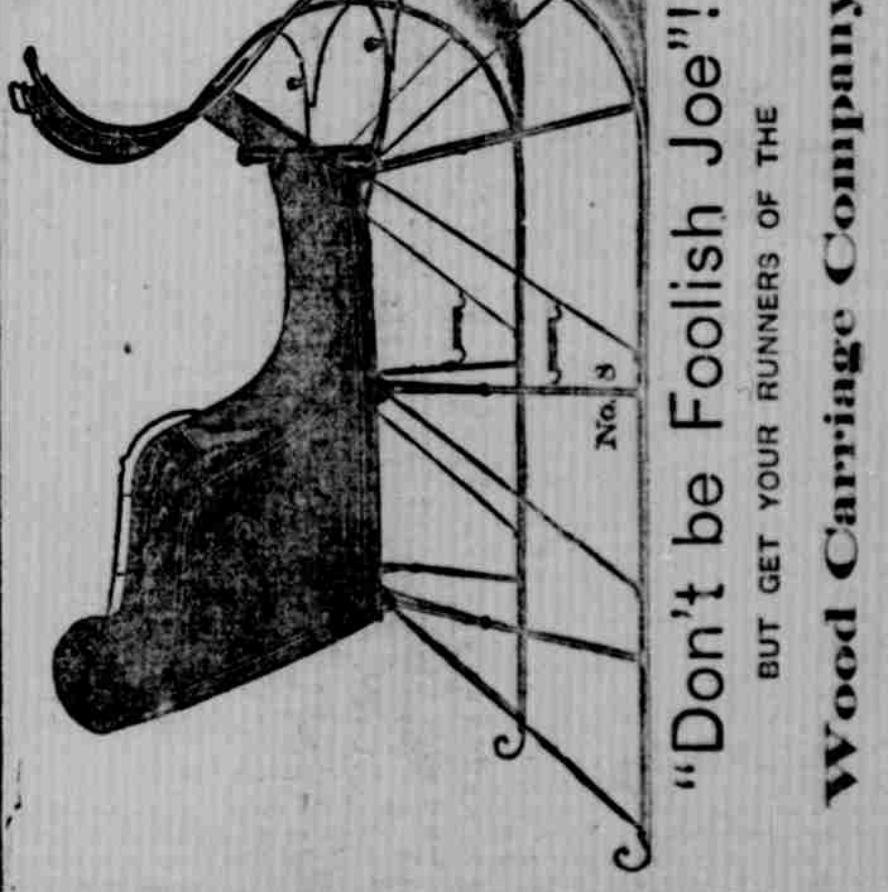
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